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# PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

## UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

### FORMALDEHYD GAS AN INSECTICIDE FOR MOSQUITOES.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
MARINE-HOSPITAL SERVICE, HYGIENIC LABORATORY,  
*Washington, D. C., July 26, 1901.*

SIR: Referring to Department Circular No. 71, of June 20, 1901, upon the subject of insects as factors in the conveyance of disease, the statement was made therein that "formaldehyd can not be depended upon, for it frequently fails to kill insects." This is true for a large number of insects, but recent experiments conducted by myself in the Hygienic Laboratory have shown that formaldehyd gas is an efficient insecticide as far as the mosquito is concerned. The experiments were all made upon the *culex pungens*, and it was found that an exposure of three hours was invariably sufficient to kill all the mosquitoes of this variety in a confined space, provided the gas was used in amounts usually employed for disinfection.

This statement concerning the effect of formaldehyd upon the mosquito is communicated as a preliminary note in view of the war that will be waged against the mosquito this summer in relation to malarial and yellow fevers.

Respectfully,

M. J. ROSENAU,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.,  
Director, Hygienic Laboratory.*

*Further concerning plague on the steamship Carlisle City.*

SAN DIEGO QUARANTINE STATION,  
*San Diego, Cal., July 17, 1901.*

SIR: Relative to statement in my letter of June 26, that it was my belief that plague infection aboard the British steamship *Carlisle City* was due to rats, I have the honor to report further my reasons therefor.

As shown in the steamship's log, the first case of illness did not occur until the ship had been out from Hongkong twenty-one days, and there is no certainty that this was a case of plague, as it was not even considered suspicious, there being no fever, the captain not discovering any glandular enlargements and looking upon the death as one purely of opium poisoning, though he says he did not examine the pupils. In fact, the history of this first case is very unsatisfactory, the captain's suspicions apparently not having been aroused as to the possibility of its being of a contagious character. In the light of subsequent events, however, and taking into consideration the secretiveness of the average Chinaman aboard an European vessel as to his physical ailments, the case must be looked upon as suspicious.